
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 February 2016

by Kevin Gleeson BA MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 18th March 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/15/3135588
Concord House, 454 London Road, Croydon CR0 9XH

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr C Ogunmakin, (Moonlit Property Limited) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref 15/01543/P, dated 8 April 2015, was refused by notice dated 24 July 2015.
 - The development proposed is described as a partial single storey extension of hostel accommodation comprising 17 units, with amenity space and associated cycle parking.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for construction of 7th floor to provide 17 units of hostel accommodation, with amenity space and associated cycle parking at Concord House, 454 London Road, Croydon CR0 9XH in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 15/01543/P, dated 8 April 2015, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 187-PL20E01 Rev B, 187-PL20E02 Rev B; 187-PL20E03 Rev B, 187-PL20E04 Rev B, 187-PL20P07 Rev D, 187-PL20P00 Rev A, 187-PL20S01 Rev B and 187-PL20P08 Rev B.
 - 3) No development shall commence until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter.
 - 4) Prior to occupation of the development, details of the cycle parking and refuse storage facilities shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter.
 - 5) No development shall commence until a Demolition / Construction Logistics Plan (including a Construction management Plan compliant with Chapter 8 of the Road Signs Manual for temporary works) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The demolition / construction works shall be carried out as approved.
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- 6) Prior to occupation of the development, a Delivery Service Management Plan and Travel Plan (for residents and staff) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The completed scheme shall be managed in accordance with the approved Delivery Service Management Plan and Travel Plan.
- 7) No development shall commence until details of how a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions of 19% beyond the 2013 Building Regulations shall be achieved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Prior to occupation of the development details confirming the carbon dioxide emissions reductions shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Procedural Matter

2. The application form describes the proposed development as a partial single storey extension. **The Council's decision notice describes the proposal as construction of 7th floor** which I consider provides greater clarity in describing the development. I have therefore used this wording in my formal decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the setting of the West Croydon United Reformed Church, a grade II listed building.

Reasons

4. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that when considering whether to grant planning permission which affects a listed building or its setting, special regard shall be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting.
5. The appeal site is immediately adjacent to West Croydon United Reformed Church which is a grade II listed building and therefore has significance as a designated heritage asset. This was formerly listed as West Croydon Congregational Church and the list description notes that it is now known as Oshwal Mahajanwadi. The listing also describes the building as dating from 1886, being in a gothic style and having a fine tower with a broad spire. It is listed partly for townscape value.
6. The historic form of the church is emphasised in close views by the height and form of the tower and spire, the roof of the nave, the boundary treatment and the position of the church within the site as well as its materials and detailing. This is in contrast to the uniformity and lack of design quality of many of the **church's neighbours**. Concord House forms a tall and bulky element in the context of the listed church. It is higher than the nave roof but lower than the spire which, with the tower provides a dominant vertical element.
7. The listed church is also experienced in views from various points in the local area including from along London Road in either direction, along Campbell Road and from Midhurst Avenue. Whilst the spire can be viewed from some distance away, as I saw during my site visit, it is viewed in the context of Concord House and to a greater degree City House. Nevertheless the views form an important part of the heritage asset and contribute to its significance.

8. Concord House forms part of the townscape of London Road which is dominated by modern multi-storey buildings with Concord House and City house being the most dominant with the more varied townscape particularly of the west side of London Road. Concord House, like many of the other buildings located in close proximity to the church forms part of the setting of the listed building but does not contribute positively to the significance of the heritage asset. In addition, in the context of the predominantly modern multi-storey townscape I consider that the contribution that the setting of the listed building makes to its significance is limited.
9. The proposed 7th floor roof extension would be set back on its front and side elevations and would generally be at the same height as the existing plant room. The proposed roof extension would be visible in some views but its form would ensure that it appeared as subservient to the host property whilst the proposed materials would not be out of keeping with the original property or the wider townscape. Consequently it would not have an overbearing impact on the church or be a dominant addition to the nature of the townscape within which the listed building is experienced and would not result in a significant change to the setting of the church. Therefore there would be no harm to the heritage significance of the listed building arising from the proposed development and therefore I find that the effect would be neutral.
10. The Council's **view is** that in its existing form the quality of design and current appearance of Concord House is harmful to the heritage value of the listed building. Consequently it was seeking improvements to the building as a whole. Whilst I have taken account of the combined / additive effects of the existing building and the proposed development I do not consider that the cumulative harm would become significant as the Council suggests. Furthermore, I do not have a proposal before me for improvements to the existing building and therefore cannot address this issue further.
11. The proposal would not conflict with Policy S1 of the Croydon Local Plan: Strategic Policies, 2013 which requires development proposals to respond and enhance to heritage assets nor with Policies SP4.1 and SP4.2 which together require development to be of a high quality, respecting and enhancing local character and protecting the setting of local landmarks. Furthermore I see no conflict with Policies SP4.11, SP4.12 and SP4.14 which aim to promote the use of heritage assets, optimise opportunities to enhance heritage assets and maintain a schedule of designated heritage assets. Similarly there is no conflict with Policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan which collectively promote the highest quality of architectural design and seek to ensure that development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance.
12. In the context of paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) I find that the proposed development although within the setting of the listed church would not cause harm to the significance of the heritage asset.

Conditions

13. In addition to the standard implementation condition I have imposed a condition specifying the relevant drawings as this provides certainty. Conditions are necessary for the benefit of the appearance of the development and its surroundings, including the adjacent listed building and in order to

manage the effects of cycle parking and refuse storage. The Council suggested a condition in relation to landscape planting. As the proposed development does not provide for landscaping I find no justification for such a condition. Conditions are required in order to minimise the effects of the proposed development on the living conditions of occupiers of the existing development, to address matters of highway safety during the construction phase and the traffic effects of the completed scheme (5 and 6). Finally a condition to reduce carbon emissions is appropriate to ensure the efficient use of energy is appropriate.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above I find that the proposed development would have a neutral effect on the setting of the adjacent listed building and therefore would not conflict with policies in the development plan or the Framework. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Kevin Gleeson

INSPECTOR